



Tapuitema

...ina ia manino le folauā.

Official American Samoa Government Weekly Newsletter



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Governor signs teacher pay raise legislation into law

Governor Togiola Tulafono signed into law on June 5 a bill that increases the salaries of local public school teachers beginning at \$7,737 up to \$35,000 depending on certification and qualifications.

The announcement was made public during the Governor's speech at the Nu'uuli Vocational/Technical High School graduation ceremony where he thanked the local teachers for their hard work and announced that he had signed the reclassification bill. (The Fono approved the legislation last month and since then, DOE and the Department of Human Resources have been working hard to implement the teacher reclassification).

The bill, which was signed as the school year came to an end, goes into effect immediately, and the first increases are expected to go into effect next month.

Togiola informed the Fono of his decision through a letter that was submitted along with a copy of the signed legislation.

The Governor explained that the intent of the bill has always been to "reward excellence in the classroom and encourage professional development." He explained that it is the sincere hope of the administration to provide a stable environment that rewards excellence, professional development, and good attendance for our teachers.

According to the Governor, recruiting and retaining teachers to provide instruction for the children of American Samoa has been a constant challenge, and the Teacher Reclassification Act revises the pay-scale for teachers, thus making the position more competitive "for easier recruiting and for retaining teachers throughout the school year."

He added that most critical to the effort is the shared position that "advancement in the teaching profession must be based on credentials, performance, and attendance."

The pay increases will be funded with unspent DOE funding for each fiscal year which, according to DOE director Dr. Claire Poumele's testimony before the Fono last month, will be an estimated \$754,00 in local revenues and \$504,000 in federal grants by the end of FY 2008.

The new reclassification bill provides for the establishment of a certification board appointed by the Governor and approved by the Fono, to oversee the licensing and certification for all teaching personnel within the public school system. The certification board is responsible for enforcing the teacher certification program adopted by DOE.

(Continued on page 2)

ASG RADIO PROGRAM

With: Gov. Togiola Tulafono

On: Showers of Blessings FM 104.7

Saturdays @ 7a.m.- 9:00a.m. Call: 699-8123/8124

Governor approves work permits for cannery workers from Samoa

Governor Togiola Tulafono has informed Fono leaders of his approval of 116 work permits for workers from Samoa to work at the two canneries. Of that number, 60 applications were for guest worker permits for Chicken of the Sea (COS) and the other 56 were for Star Kist Samoa.

Togiola made the announcement to the Fono on May 23, just two days before the second 50-cent minimum wage hike went into effect in the territory.

The Governor explained that the permits were approved because the sponsors (canneries) have been unable to meet employment needs with individuals currently residing in American Samoa.

The Governor's approval is in accordance with the guest worker permit program law which went into effect last year, aimed at addressing the shortage of cannery workers. Under the same law, the proposed call centers are permitted to recruit workers from Samoa if there is not enough of a workforce that can be hired locally.

It also requires the Attorney General's Office to provide a list of foreign nationals and their local hosts to the Governor, who approves the permits before the list is forwarded to the local Legislature.

Teacher pay raise... (continued from page 1)

Under the new law, and based on certifications and qualifications, teachers with temporary certifications will make no less than \$7,737 per year, while a teacher with a provisional certificate will earn no less than \$11,566 per year.

Teachers who possess a professional certificate I will earn at least \$17,572 annually while a teacher with a professional certificate II will make no less than \$21,575 per year. A teacher with a professional certificate III will get paid at least \$25,841 a year while teachers with a professional certificate IV will make no less than \$30,945 annually.

Degrees in Samoan language and culture are to be reviewed by DOE.

Under the new law, foreign degree holders must submit to DOE their qualifications for review by a reputable and authorized assessment agency to determine the holders' certification status with DOE. Long time educators with baccalaureate degrees who have worked for ASDOE for 2 decades or more are exempted from the certification requirements, but they must successfully complete additional coursework as prescribed by the certification board.

Veteran teachers without baccalaureate degrees must successfully complete an annual veteran training program in addition to successfully completing prescribed coursework in order to be eligible for increment consideration.

The new law states that increments will be implemented annually instead of every two years as the administration had originally proposed.

Currently, there is an estimated 900 teachers employed in the public school system.

HISTORICAL NOTES

By: Stan Sorensen, Historian, Office of the Governor

On June 7, 1943, Captain Edwin Taylor Pollock, 14th naval governor of American Samoa (March 1, 1922--September 4, 1923), was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery at 11:00 a.m., following funeral services "at the Church of the Covenant, 18th and N Streets, NW, Washington, D.C., with the Reverend Albert Joseph McCartney officiating." Pallbearers included retired Rear Admirals Horatio G. Gillmor, Harley H. Christy and John D. Beuret, retired Marine Corps Brigadier General Rufus Lane, and retired Navy Captains Adelbert Althouse and Chester C. Wells.

On June 8, 1867, Midshipman Benjamin Franklin Tilley (who would become American Samoa's first naval governor on February 17, 1900), graduated first in his class at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and was commissioned as an Ensign with the serial number 103.

On June 8, 1922, the "Transportation Services of American Samoa" began. One bus ran from Pago Pago to Utulei to Leone. By 1927, the fare westward was 40 cents to Nu'uuli, 60 cents to Mapusaga and 75 cents to Leone. Eastward, the fare was 40 cents to Lauli'i and 75 cents to Faga'itua.

On June 10, 1899, the "Kingship" of Samoa was vacated, and was replaced by a Provisional Government of Consuls, as follows: Friedrich Rose (Germany); Ernest George Berkeley Maxse (England) and Luther Wood Osborn (United States). Dr. Wilhelm Heinrich Solf, Ph.D. (in Philology), a veteran civil servant in the German colonial service, was appointed as Executive Director.

On June 10, 1919, Commander Warren Jay Terhune succeeded Commander John Martin Poyer and became American Samoa's 12th naval governor (until his suicide on November 3, 1920). Commander Terhune was the only American Samoan governor who died in office.

On June 10, 1976, Congressman Philip Burton (D-CA) introduced a bill to make it possible for American Samoa's Governor and Lieutenant Governor to be popularly elected rather than appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives by a landslide vote of 377 to 1.

On June 11, 1984, American Samoa's *Fono* (Legislature) denied Governor Peter Tali Coleman's bid for a third term. Later in the year, this decision was upheld by the High Court and the Secretary of the Interior.

On June 13, 1722, Dutch navigator Admiral Jacob Roggeveen, after "discovering" Easter Island and several islands in the Tuamotu group, arrived in Samoa. Roggeveen's three ships were the *Arend*, under Captain Jan Koster; the *Thienhoven*, under Captain Cornelis Bouman, and the *Afrikaansche Galey*, commanded by Captain Roeloeff Rosendaal. They sighted Rose Atoll, which they named "Vuyle Eylandt" (Bird Island). On the following days, they sighted all of the Samoan islands, except for Savai'i, Apolima and Manono. Roggeveen named the Manu'a group the "Isles of Bouman" after Cornelis Bouman. He named Tutuila "Thienhoven Island" and 'Upolu "Groeningen Island."

Governor reminds locals that filing taxes using other people's kids is against the law

Governor Togiola Tulafono said during his weekend radio program that one of the biggest problems facing the Tax Office involves locals who are claiming other people's children as dependents on their income tax returns.

The Governor reminds local tax filers that such actions are against the law and a number of cases discovered during the issuance of tax rebate checks have revealed that the practice is ongoing in the territory.

Togiola stresses that if a person did not take care of the children being claimed on their tax returns, then it is illegal for them to claim the children as dependents.

Currently, the Governor's Office is reviewing cases involving these fraudulent activities, while the Tax Office is taking a closer look at the issue prior to issuing any tax rebate checks. According to Togiola, some taxpayers will be very unhappy to discover that they will not be receiving a rebate check as a result of engaging in such practices.

Meanwhile, several local residents have been called in to the Tax Office to amend their 2007 tax returns and make changes that include providing proof that the children being claimed are in fact theirs, and that the children have valid social security numbers. This is to ensure that each tax filer gets what they are entitled to under the tax stimulus package.

The tax stimulus package is in its first year and some parents are regretting ever letting family members and friends claim their children as dependents on their 2007 tax returns, as now those people are benefiting not once, but twice, using children they don't even take care of.

In response to a caller that said her husband was told by a Tax Office employee that he was entitled to two tax rebate checks because he works two jobs and filed two separate tax returns, Governor Togiola explained that each tax filer, regardless of whether they work more than one job, should only file one tax return and therefore, would be entitled to only one tax rebate check.

The Governor said filing more than one tax return is against the law and he will request the Treasury Department to look into the matter.

So far, over 9,650 locals have received their tax rebate checks, totaling over \$10 million from the \$20.4 million the American Samoa Government received in April under the federal economic stimulus package.

ASG has until July 31 to process and issue tax rebate checks to qualified tax payers who filed their 2007 tax returns on or before April 15. Those who filed after that date but before November 30 should expect to get their tax rebate checks by December 31, 2008.

SHARE IMPORTANT INFORMATION & ACTIVITIES IN YOUR ASG NEWSLETTER

with your ASG workforce as well as the citizens of American Samoa.

Email your articles, announcements, pictures or other information to:

Harry Stevens (harry.stevens@americansamoa.gov) or Tialuga Vince Iuli (vince.iuli@americansamoa.gov)

10TH FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS COMING SOON...

PLEASE KEEP AMERICAN SAMOA CLEAN!

FA'AMAMA AMERIKA SAMOA!

Feleti Bartsow Public Library offering summertime computer classes

Local students looking for something to do during the summer are invited to participate in the introductory computer classes being offered at the Feleti Barstow Public Library in Utulei.

Classes are open to students who have little or no hands-on experience with computers.

The schedule is as follows:

June 9 – 20: Students entering into grades 9 and 10

July 7 – 18: Students entering into grades 11 and 12

Aug 4 – 22 (3 weeks): Students entering grades 6, 7, and 8

All sessions are from Monday – Friday for two hours from 9:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Each class covers an introduction to computer components and basic computer language, as well as using Microsoft Word, setting up an e-mail account, and using the internet for research purposes.

All participants are required to pay a deposit of \$10 which is refundable following the successful completion of the course. Each participant will receive a special certificate to signify their success.

The FBPL reminds all interested students and their parents that class sizes are limited so early registration is encouraged. Registration can only be done by a parent or guardian, and more information can be obtained by visiting the Library's circulation desk or by calling 633-5816.

The summertime computer courses are only some of the numerous services offered at the Feleti Barstow Public Library. Throughout the year, the FBPL offers computer classes for adults, as well as high school students who have extra time after school.

Younger children can also benefit from FBPL programs which include story time and arts and crafts sessions. At the Feleti Barstow Public Library, people can "come to read" and "stay to learn!"

The FBPL is open from 9 a.m. – 5p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Saturdays. They are closed on Sunday and all government holidays.

New stands at the Veterans Memorial Stadium set to be completed in time for Pacific Arts Festival

Local residents visiting the Veterans Memorial Stadium in Tafuna will see a very big difference across the field on the opposite side facing the grand stand, where employees from the Department of Public Works have been working hard to construct a new stand set to be completed in time for the territory to host the upcoming 10th Festival of Pacific Arts on July 20 – August 2.

According to DPW director Taeaotui Punafo Tilei, the new stands are about 90% complete and funding for the project is being generously provided by the Arts Festival committee from their budget.

In addition to the new seating area for spectators, Taeaotui said there are about a half dozen rooms being installed on the lower level, in addition to bathrooms and facilities that, if it pleases the Arts Festival Committee, could be used as locker rooms by the territory's young athletes during sporting events.

Public Works employees began construction of the project earlier this year in February. Taeaotui said that four months later, the project is headed for completion, which is much quicker than what was expected.

The DPW director credits the local business community, whom he says played a major role in assisting with the speedy progress of the project. According to Taeaotui, owners of local building supply stores have been able to provide all the materials requested in a timely fashion, resulting in the project moving forward with no delays.

"I want to really give credit to our local business owners who have helped us with this project," Taeaotui said. "Without their help, this project would not have been carried out this fast."

The DPW director was excited when Governor Togiola Tulafono visited the project site, saying that the Governor was very pleased with the progress of the work, and encouraged them to move full speed ahead.

Taeaotui said that with good weather conditions, the project should be fully completed and dedicated by the end of this month.

Territory received \$30 million for WIC in the last five years

The US Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) reports that a little over \$30 million was awarded to American Samoa over the last five fiscal years under the federally funded Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.

The report is based on the latest data as of May 23, 2008 and covers all states and territories that received federal funding for fiscal years 2003-2007 for the WIC program.

WIC is administered locally by the Department of Human and Social Services (DHSS), and provides federal grants to supplement food, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breast-feeding, and non-breastfeeding post-partum women, as well as infants and children up to 5 years old who are considered to be at nutritional risk.

FNS reports that a little over \$30.99 million was awarded to American Samoa. A total of \$23.43 million was allocated for "food costs" while \$7.57 million was set aside for "nutrition service and administrative costs."

FNS says that the costs for nutrition service and administration include, among other things, certifying participants' eligibility, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion, healthcare coordination and referral, financial management, program integrity, and systems development and operations.

According to the report, the average monthly benefit per person, from lowest to highest, ranges from \$57.26 in FY 2006 to \$61.68 in FY 2003.

ASG spent only \$.57-cents for every \$1 collected in April

The Treasury Department's Monthly Financial Overview Report for local funds for April 2008 has been submitted to Governor Togiola Tulafono from ASG Treasurer Gaea Perefoti Failautusi and the figures are nothing less than wonderful.

According to the report, for every \$1 received in April, only \$.57-cents was spent.

Altogether, ASG collected \$10,483,649 and the actual expenditures amounted to only \$5,994,074 for that month.

The excess in revenue can be credited to several ASG funding sources and departments which increased their collections – some by more than 1,000% like the Department of Health which collected nothing last April but raked in \$5,947 two months ago. Others that went from penniless collections last April to \$6,500 and \$4,730 respectively the same time this year are Road Maintenance and Traffic Violations.

Even the Department of Parks and Recreation bumped its collections up to a whopping \$6,450 from \$700 the same time last year.

Perhaps the most notable increases came from the Tax Office which brought in \$5,476,869 in April 2008 - nearly double what it brought in the same time last year (\$2,862,098) – and the Tax Reserve which went from collecting a mere \$412,040 last April to \$1,263,997 two months ago.

Also, grants fund only had \$4,858 in their account last April but the same time this year, that amount skyrocketed to \$748,294.

The Department of Agriculture went from collecting \$7,993 in April 2007 up to \$25,201 the same time this year.

The following is a list of other ASG funding sources, departments, and agencies that contributed to the excess revenue for April 2008:

SOURCE	2008	2007
Immigration Bond	\$56,244	\$52,133
OMV	\$81,313	\$81,045
Vital Statistics	\$5,199	\$4,968
Attorney General	\$29,865	\$24,265
Judicial	\$25,497	\$21,410
Workmen's Compensation	\$130,744	\$90,352
Customs	\$1,727,135	\$1,700,988
Port	\$262,394	\$182,244
PFC	\$16,889	\$6,946

PNRS to host public hearing for highly anticipated fiber optic cable

The Department of Commerce's Project Notification and Review Board has issued a notice of public hearing to address the proposed fiber optic cable expected to land in the territory by the end of the year. (The fiber optic cable will increase the reliability and speed of internet and phone lines, as well as voice capability, and data transfer for various areas like tele-health and remote distance learning in American Samoa, as it would directly link the territory with the Aloha State).

The fiber optic cable runs between New Zealand and Hawaii, coming roughly 100 miles from American Samoa. It has fallen out of use but expected to still be in good working order. The proposed action would cut the line and relay the cable to American Samoa so the territory will be hooked up directly to Hawaii.

An environmental assessment of the proposal has been completed and is available for the public to view at the Department of Commerce on the second floor of the Executive Office Building in Utulei.

The PNRS is inviting and encouraging all members of the public to attend and participate in the public hearing, which is scheduled to take place at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 2 at the Convention Center in Utulei.

All written comments regarding the proposal must be submitted to the DOC no later than 4 p.m. on Tuesday, July 1.

All questions and requests for more information can be forwarded to PNRS coordinator Apulu Veronika Mata'utia Mortenson, or the environmental planner for the American Samoa Coastal Management Program Mr. Doug Harper at 633-5155 ext. 64.

Governor Togiola Tulafono signed last month documents that would facilitate bringing in the multi-million-dollar Pacific Rim East undersea fiber optic cable to the territory.

"The submarine fiber optic cable is the most significant economic development project in the last several decades," Togiola said. "The sea of change that this project represents is absolutely tremendous."

He described the fiber optic project as "a major priority" of the Administration. "The possibilities alone for distance health, learning, and business applications alone are impressive," Togiola said. "You add to that the increased capacity for establishing and growing technology-based businesses and government, and the possibilities are limitless!"

The vessel is expected to bring the cable to American Samoa later this year in November, and the work is expected to take 30 days or so. Depending on weather conditions, American Samoa should be connected to the cable during the first quarter of 2009.

The parties involved in the Pac Rim cable project include ASG, Telecom New Zealand, Merchant Capital (an investment and merchant banking company based in Alabama), and Elandia Incorporated (parent company of Blue Sky Communications).

ASG expenditures decrease, resulting in excess revenue of more than \$4million

According to the Treasury Department's Financial Overview Report for local funds for the month of April 2008, the American Samoa Government spent over \$100,000 less than what was initially projected, resulting in excess revenue of more than \$4 million for ASG in April.

Governor Togiola Tulafono has been forwarded a copy of the report which was prepared and submitted by ASG Treasurer Gaea Perefoti Failautusi.

The most notable savings came from the "miscellaneous" category which cost the ASG \$203,980 last April. This year however, not a penny was spent in that same category.

The projected revenue and expenditures for April was listed at \$6,131,917 but ASG funding sources, departments, and agencies were able to collect more - approximately \$10,483,649 - and spend less, approximately \$5,994,074.

The decrease in spending is thanks to several departments like Legal Affairs which reduced its spending by nearly half, down from \$333,055 last April to only \$173,356 two months ago.

Others that followed suit include the Department of Education which cut its spending from \$1,561,254 last April to \$1,480,802 the same time this year.

The Department of Youth and Women's Affairs managed to slash its spending by more than half, from \$22,190 last April to \$10,062 in April of this year. Even the Department of Administrative Services did their part, reducing their spending from \$128,690 in April 2007 to only \$66,388 the same time this year.

(Continued on page 8)

Governor Togiola speaks out against citizenship bill pending in Congress

Governor Togiola Tulafono spoke out against a federal bill sponsored by Congressman Faleomavaega Eni, saying that the bill, if passed, would benefit foreigners more than US Nationals.

Speaking on his weekend radio program, Togiola said the bill forces US citizenship on US Nationals and he strongly opposes the measure, as he sees no additional benefits for US Nationals to become US citizens. He said that the bill would extend federal immigration laws to the territory, which currently has control of its own immigration and border issues, and the bill would mean that all provisions of the US Constitution and laws would apply to American Samoa.

One of the requirements the measure would waive, is the requirement that a US National reside in one of the 50 states for three months before applying for citizenship. In addition, another waiver would include the test of English proficiency and knowledge of US history and government.

The Governor said he wants the public to provide input on the bill before it is passed and enacted into law.

According to the Governor, if this happens, US citizenship will be forced upon US Nationals residing in American Samoa and that is why he is calling on the public to voice their opinion(s) on the matter, so a message can be sent to the Nation's Capitol before Congress issues a final decision on the matter.

Faleomavaega has explained that the bill (H.R. 6191), would waive certain naturalization requirements for US Nationals living in American Samoa who 'wish' to become US citizens."

Basically, the proposed measure is to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to waive certain requirements for naturalization for American Samoan United States nationals to become US citizens.

Faleomavaega explained that the bill allows any person who wishes to become a US citizen to apply directly from American Samoa, instead of traveling to the US.

But the Governor argues that US Nationals are receiving the same benefits as US citizens, including the ability to travel abroad freely with a US passport, not to mention other federal benefits.

Togiola made reference to the Future Political Status Study Commission (FPSSC) whom already addressed the issue and recommended in their 2007 report that the territory not seek US citizenship for its people "at this time."

One of the things the Governor touched on was the military draft which, according to him, would affect all those 18 years old and older who are US citizens residing in the territory. He explained that such a policy does not currently apply to American Samoans, thanks to their US National status, and added that some active Samoan military members, although they have the option to apply for US citizenship, decide against it and instead, keep their US National status.

But the biggest concern, according to the Governor, is that such a policy would open up a door that would be flooded by an increasing number of foreigners relocating to the territory so their children can be born here and later on, become US citizens.

(Continued on page 8)

Governor Togiola speaks out against citizenship bill... *(from page 7)*

According to the Governor, such a thing impact local customs and issues with land. Because of this, Togiola believes the measure would benefit foreigners more than it would US Nationals and if the territory begins to experience an influx of foreigners upon passage of the proposed bill, then he would have no choice but to put a stop to the number of foreigners entering the territory.

Local residents wishing to submit their opinions on the measure are welcomed to write to Congress with their views or otherwise, forward their concerns to the Governor's Office who will relay the message to Washington for them.

ASG expenditures decrease... *(continued from page 6)*

The following is a list of other ASG departments and funding sources that cut their spending and therefore, contributed to the ASG banking more than \$4 million in local funds two months ago:

SOURCE	2008	2007
Port Administration	\$159,898	\$163,185
Department of Commerce	\$7,529	\$19,574
Human Resources	\$77,483	\$78,470
Parks and Recreation	\$52,097	\$62,642
Budget Office	\$43,999	\$46,544
Marine and Wildlife Resources	\$0	\$43
Tourism (DOC)	\$14,165	\$26,498
Arts Council	\$600	\$1,188
Property Management	\$25,312	\$27,177
Law Office	\$10,330	\$12,986
Public Market	\$11,544	\$11,611
Golf Course	\$32,927	\$49,039

Some of the savings may not seem significant but judging from the final result, it's safe to say that every little penny saved can amount to millions in revenue for the American Samoa Government.